

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00075 01 OF 02 051119Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-05
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /057 W
-----073975 051131Z /14

R 051030Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9850
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD POUCH
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 0075

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV
SUBJECT: OPTIONS IN KUWAIT GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE AND SUCCESSION UNDER NEW AMIR:

REF: INR REPORT NO. 73, DATED AUGUST 13, 1975.

1. SUMMARY: UNDER THE KUWAIT CONSTITUTION, THE NEW AMIR MUST FILL THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP AND THE HEIR APPARENCY, THE LATTER WITHIN A YEAR. HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONSULT AT LENGTH ON THE LATTER NOMINATION. THE FIELD OF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KUWAIT 00075 01 OF 02 051119Z

ELIGIBLES FOR THESE TWO POSITIONS IS APPARENTLY LIMITED TO HIS OWN BIFURCATED, EXTENDED FAMILY. THERE ARE ALSO RUMORS OF A WIDER CABINET RESHUFFLE, BUT NEW MINISTERS WILL BE NAMED, IF AT ALL, ONLY AFTER A NEW PRIME MINISTER IS ANNOUNCED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DEATH ON DEC. 31 OF THE AMIR OF KUWAIT AND THE

CONSTITUTIONAL ACCESSION OF HIS COUSIN AND LONG-DESIGNATED HEIR, SHEIKH JABER AL-AHMAD AL-JABER AL-SABAH, HAS OPENED UP TWO KEY VACANCIES IN THE KUWAITI GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE. BOTH THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP AND THE POSITION OF HEIR APPARENT (COMMONLY CALLED CROWN PRINCE) HAD HERETOFORE BEEN OCCUPIED BY SHEIKH JABER AL-MAD. HE HAS THE OPTION NOW TO SEPARATE THEM, BUT HE WILL FILL BOTH, SINCE BOTH ARE MANDATED BY THE CONSTITUTION (ARTICLES

47

AND 56, RESPECTIVELY). THE CONSTITUTION ALSO IMPOSES A DEADLINE OF ONE YEAR FOR FILLING THE HEIR APPARENCY WITH A "LEGITIMATE SON" WHO IS A DESCENDANT OF THE FOUNDER OF MODERN KUWAIT, SHEIKH MUBARAK AL-SABAH (RULED 1896-1915). TRADITION DICTATES THAT ONLY DESCENDANTS OF HIS TWO FAVORITE SONS (JABER, RULED 1915-1917, AND SALEM, RULED 1917-1921) SHOULD BE AMIR.

3. THE AMIR HAS NUMEROUS OPTIONS IN CHOOSING AN HEIR AND A PRIME MINISTER. HIS CHOICES, NEVERTHELESS, ARE LIMITED BY FAMILY, PERSONALITY AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. AMONG THESE IS THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING FAMILY UNITY BY ALLOWING BOTH OF THE TWO MAIN BRANCHES OF THE SABAH FAMILY (HIS OWN JABER BRANCH AND HIS PREDECESSOR'S SALEM BRANCH) TO HOLD HIGH GOVERNMENT POSITIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY. ALSO, THE TWO PRECEDING AMIRS WERE FROM THE SALEM BRANCH, WHICH HAS GIVEN RISE TO A FEELING AMONG SOME KUWAITIS THAT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KUWAIT 00075 01 OF 02 051119Z

A SECOND JABER SHOULD NOW BE NAMED HEIR, TO EVENTUALLY SUCCEED THE NEW AMIR, AND THUS PRECISELY REDRESS THE TRADITIONAL ALTERNATION OF THE AMIRATE BETWEEN THE TWO BRANCHES. IT MAY WELL BE THAT DESIGNATION OF THE HEIR APPARENT WILL BE PART OF A BROADER, NEGOTIATED PACKAGE IN WHICH SELECTIONS FOR OTHER INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS, AND CONSIDERATIONS OF MARRIAGE TIES, AMONG OTHER FACTORS, PLAY A ROLE IN MAXIMIZING FAMILY HARMONY.

4. PROMINENT JABERS WHOM THE AMIR MAY BE CONSIDERING FOR EITHER POST INCLUDE HIS BROTHER, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SABAH AL-AHMAD AND OTHERS, SUCH AS MISH'AL, CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE. ON THE SALEM SIDE, IT APPEARS THAT SHEIKH JABER AL-ALI AL-SALEM AL-SABAH, CURRENTLY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER/MINISTER OF INFORMATION, IS IN A STRONG POSITION TO MOVE UP TO ONE OF THE TWO TOP POSITIONS. (HE HAS ACTED AS PRIME MINISTER IN THE PAST DURING THOSE PERIODS WHEN THE NEW AMIR WAS ACTING AS AMIR, AND JABER AL-ALI IS NOW AGAIN ACTING PRIME MINISTER.) SHAIKH SA'AD AL-ABDULLAH AL-SALEM AL-SABAH, MINISTER OF INTERIOR/DEFENSE IS ALSO A POSSIBLE CANDIDATE FOR THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP. IN ANY EVENT, NONE OF THE MOST LIKELY

HALF DOZEN CANDIDATES, OF EITHER JABER OR SALEM
BRANCHES, APPEARS TO PRESENT A THREAT TO US INTERESTS.

5. INTRA-FAMILY CONSULTATIONS WILL BE CARRIED ON
INTENSIVELY AND SECRETLY UNTIL THE HEIR APPARENCY AND
PRIME MINISTERSHIP ARE FILLED. WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO RECEIVE
DEFINITIVE WORD OF THE CHOICES BEFORE THEY ARE ANNOUNCED
PUBLICLY. IT IS PRESUMABLY INCUMBENT UPON THE AMIR, HOW-
EVER, TO DELAY HIS DECISIONS UNTIL ALL KEY VOICES HAVE BEEN
HEARD, AT LEAST IN THE CASE OF A NEW HEIR APPARENT (WHO IS,
AFTER ALL, NAMED FOR LIFE), SO WE WOULD NOT EXPECT AN
INSTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THIS. (THE CURRENT AMIR WAS
NAMED HEIR APPARENT SIX MONTHS AFTER THE POSITION BECAME
VACANT.) A DELAY IS ANTICIPATED ALSO BECAUSE TWO KEY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 KUWAIT 00075 01 OF 02 051119Z

POSITIONS ARE TO BE FILLED AND ATTEMPTS AT FAMILY BARGAINING
ARE TO BE EXPECTED IN SUCH A SITUATION. IN THE CASE OF THE
HEIR APPARENCY, A LEGAL QUIRK MAY BE INVOLVED IN THE
NAMING OF A CROWN PRINCE. ARTICLE 4 OF THE CONSTITUTION
PROVIDES THAT AN HEIR APPARENT SHALL BE NOMINATED BY THE
AMIR AND APPROVED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
THERE IS NO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY NOW, AND, THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS HAS BEEN EXERCISING ALL LEGISLATIVE POWERS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00075 02 OF 02 051122Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-05
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /057 W
-----073997 051131Z /12

R 051030Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9851
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD POUCH
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUWAIT 0075

6. SOME KUWAITI PRESS REPORTS PREDICT A GENERAL RESHUFFLE OF THE KUWAITI CABINET (COUNCIL OF MINISTERS) CONCURRENTLY WITH THE NAMING OF A NEW PRIME MINISTER. RUMORS ON THIS WILL REACH GALE FORCE SHORTLY. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WILL STAY AT THEIR POSTS AND WILL BE CONSIDERED AS HAVING RESIGNED ONLY AT THE TIME A NEW PRIME MINISTER IS APPOINTED.
MAESTRONE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KUWAIT00075
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780008-0372
Format: TEL
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780197/aaaaddzp.tel
Line Count: 190
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 18d48be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: INR REPORT NO. 73
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3825563
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPTIONS IN KUWAIT GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE AND SUCCESSION UNDER NEW AMIR
TAGS: PGOV, KU, (AL-SABAH, JABER AL-AHMAD AL-JABER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/18d48be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014